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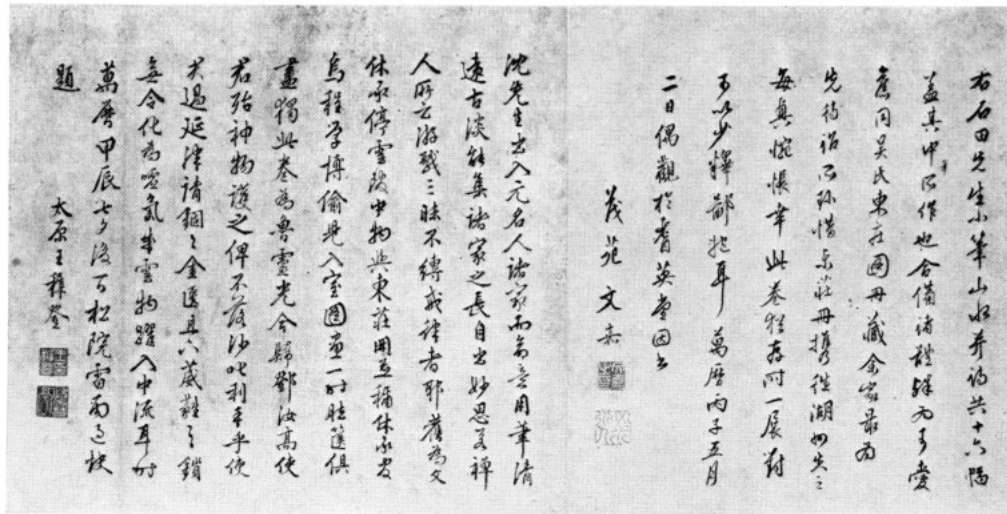


Horse with a Female Rider

Chinese, T'ang Dynasty (618-907)
Gift of C. Adrian Rubel

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

SUBSCRIPTION ONE DOLLAR



The two encomiums inscribed at the end of the album

name Lu Shu-shêng, the third son of Lu Hsin-yüan. Some time later the album passed into the celebrated collection of the Viceroy Tuan Fang (1861-1911), according to the labels on the album inscribed by Chang Tsu-i in 1909.¹ The label on the wrapper states that the album "was owned formerly by Tuan Wu-ch'iao (Tuan Fang) and now it belongs to T'ien-hsi-shuang-pei Kuan."² Recently it has become one of the valued possessions of this Museum.

KOJIRO TOMITA.
A. KAIMING CHIU.

¹ It may be supposed that the remounting of the album took place in 1909 at which time the order of some of the leaves was changed from that described in Lu Hsin-yüan's catalogue.

² This may possibly be the studio name of Chang Tsu-i.

A Predynastic Egyptian Hippopotamus

"The wonderful hippopotamus!
The only one ever in America!"

THIS bold statement is found printed on the cover of John Petherick's delightful little study *A Full and Interesting Account of the Great Hippopotamus: From the White Nile* (Boston: J. H. & F. F. Farwell, 1861), and, no doubt, the author meant it seriously, considering the cost of bringing the first live hippopotamus to this country. Since then others have followed, not only in the flesh, but also in effigy. One of the latter species has recently been added to the Museum's collections of predynastic objects from Egypt. It is unique and in a way would have been worthy Mr. Petherick's exalted exclamation.¹

¹ Acc. No. 48.252. Gift of Mrs. Charles Gaston Smith's Group. Formerly in the collection of Dr. F. R. Martin of Stockholm, Sweden, who bought the statuette in Egypt in 1903. Provenance not known. Height (with base) 13.7 cm.; length of the animal 26 cm.; width 9 cm.; length of the base 29.6 cm.; greatest width 17.3 cm.; average thickness 2.2 cm.

The pottery statuette (Fig. 1) shows a standing hippopotamus in its most ancient mode of representation. Four barrel-shaped legs, without indication of the feet, support the curved, rather formless body. The head is square and flat. Merely the nostrils, the eyes, and the little ears which are laid back modify its geometric shape. Toward the mouth, the thickness of the head increases, and there is a shallow groove at the muzzle as if the sculptor had intended to mark the separation of upper and lower jaws. The two legs of each pair are set well apart, a feature not much noticeable in front because of the bulk of the massive head. The hindquarters are adorned by a short pointed tail.

The base (Fig. 8. Drawing by Miss Suzanne E. Chapman) is approximately rectangular. At the front two rounded protuberances curve up. On each side of the animal the base has four holes, three of which are spaced between the hind and front legs while the fourth pierces the base of the two projecting pieces. The first-mentioned three holes run through the base vertically; the fourth hole is placed at an angle. All holes had been made after the shaping of the base had been finished and while the clay was still wet. Invariably the opening of the holes is smaller on the under side of the base; this as well as the raised rim around each hole on the upper side reveal the concentric movement with which the ancient craftsman used his stick when he pierced the base.

The way in which the statuette was formed can still be traced, despite the smooth finish of back, flanks, and head of the animal. Apparently it was cut out of a flat piece of clay, all four legs being spread apart, and then bent into its present shape. The head is hollow underneath, and so is the body. The flanks were merely bent under, and the legs were rounded out and joined to the



Fig. 1. Hippopotamus, pottery

Gift of Mrs. Charles Gaston Smith's Group

Early Predynastic

base with a few finger strokes which have left their tell-tale marks to this day.¹

In its present condition the figure has a surface varying in color from a light muddy tan to pink, red, and a dark shiny brown. The under side of the base is brick-red, a natural result of the firing process. The traces of red and brown on the body of the hippopotamus at first suggested that the animal had been painted. However, a detailed examination by Mr. William J. Young, Head of the Research Laboratory of the Museum of Fine Arts, revealed that all colored matter was of the same composition as the clay proper and that its appearance is also a result of the firing process. The lack of silicates in the discolored parts of the surface shows that the little figure was not covered by a glaze, but only by a slip of diluted clay which, in all probability, was applied when the piece was almost dry. Thus, the red and dark-brown coloring is solely due to the extrusion of ferrous oxide in the clay during the course of the fairly low firing. In the beginning, however, the statuette must have been fired rapidly as indicated by the blackened (carbonized) core visible on the chipped edges of the base.

The general impression gained from the statuette is one of primitive force which alone points to

its predynastic origin, and this attribution is also supported by the technique of the modeling. The statuette is far removed from the alert rigidity found in the hippopotami of the early dynastic period,¹ and it has nothing whatsoever in common with the figurines dated to the Middle Kingdom (Fig. 2)² which are well known for their colorful glaze and plant ornaments painted on the body. From the New Kingdom only one crude pottery statuette of a hippopotamus has been reported which does not at all resemble the Boston piece.³ I also know of only one representation from the Late Period which is, however, made of limestone

¹ The best example of this type is found in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek at Copenhagen; see: Otto Koefoed-Petersen, in *From the Collections of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek 2* (1938), pp. 53-64; Vagn Poulsen *Skulpturboken* (Stockholm, 1947), p. 25 and pl. 2. Another piece of the same period is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art at New York (M.M.A. 03.4.1) from Abydos; see: F. Petrie, *Abydos II* (London, 1903), p. 27 and pl. X, 226.

From the Old Kingdom only one specimen is known, made of wood, which is now in the Cairo Museum; see: E. Chassinat, in *Fondation Eugène Piot, Monuments et Mémoires 25* (1921-1922), p. 64.

² Left: M.F.A. 20.1118; length 4.7 cm., height 2.7 cm.; from El Bersheh (Reisner's tomb no. 19A); ultramarine blue glaze with two light blue spots on either side of the body.

Right: M.F.A. 13.4121; length 7.7 cm., height 3.5 cm.; from Kerma (debris of K 1001; see: G. A. Reisner, *Kerma I-III*, p. 315; *Kerma IV-V*, p. 173); blue glaze, with plant ornament in black.

There are, however, some made of limestone from that period; see: Keimer, in *Revue de l'Égypte ancienne 2* (1929), p. 225 fig. 19; G. A. Reisner, *Models of Ships and Boats* (Le Caire, 1913), pls. XIX and XXIV; Keimer, in *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte 42* (1943), pp. 274-276 figs. 55-56; G. Caton Thompson and E. W. Gardner, *The Desert Fayum* (London, 1934), p. 139 (Q. S. 16), pl. LXXXIV, 5.

The Turin Museum has several small, roughly formed pottery hippopotamus statuettes from its excavations at Assiut; see: G. Farina, *Il R. Museo di Antichità di Torino, Sezione Egitizia*, 2d ed. (Roma, 1938), p. 21. A fine Middle Kingdom hippopotamus of alabaster with base is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (M.M.A. 20.2.25); see: *Ancient Egyptian Animals, A Picture Book* (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1942), fig. 19.

³ H. Frankfort and J. D. S. Pendlebury, *The City of Akhenaten*, part II (London, 1933), pl. XL, 8.

¹ The modern ceramic sculptor sometimes still employs the same simple method of modeling; see: Ruth H. Randall, *Ceramic Sculpture* (New York, 1948), p. 27, fig. 8 which shows the flattened piece of clay, the paper pattern with the help of which the hippopotamus is being cut, and the finished statuette. The author explains in the caption that "the legs are bent into tubular forms and the head and body left open on the under side." I owe this reference as well as some technical information to the kindness of Mr. Norman Arsenault, Head of the Ceramics Department of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts and Director of the Pottery Workshop of Boston.

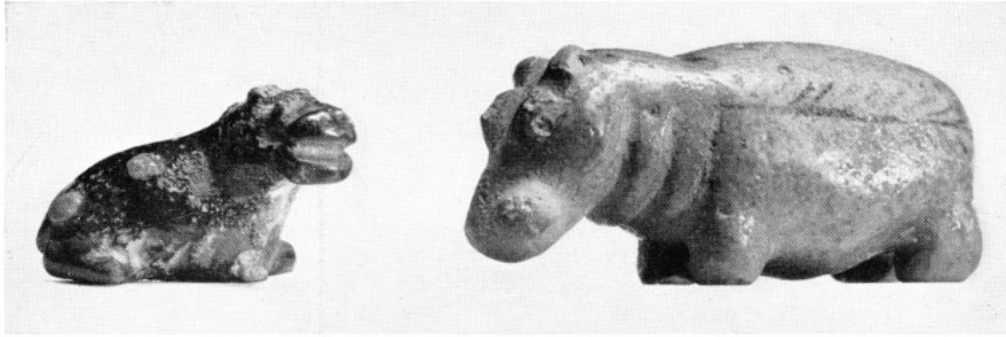


Fig. 2. Hippopotami, faience

Boston

Middle Kingdom

(Fig. 3, in Avignon)¹ and continues the characteristic features of the type of statuette evolved during the Middle Kingdom.

The long range of prehistoric times in Egypt has been divided into the Tasian, Badarian, Early Predynastic (Naqada I), Middle Predynastic (Naqada II), and Late Predynastic periods, and lacking information as to the provenance of the Boston hippopotamus it would seem difficult to assign it to any particular prehistoric

epoch, especially since in very early times the style of sculpture presents still considerable variations. Yet it appears possible to place our statuette within a range of not more than three hundred years by assigning it to roughly the first half of the early predynastic period (Naqada I) which is generally assumed to have lasted from ca. 4000-3500 B.C. Several factors render this dating very likely. The hippopotamus is, during the Naqada I period, the most frequently represented animal,¹ and several pieces of animal sculpture in pottery have been found in tombs dated to this period by archaeological means² and have to be

¹ Published by kind permission of M. Joseph Girard, Conservateur du Musée Calvet, Avignon (Vaucluse). It is made of limestone; length 39 cm., width 12.5 cm. The provenance is unknown; it was brought from Egypt in 1820 and is registered under number A 48. For the dating of this piece (mainly based on the treatment of the legs, worked three quarters in the round between which the stone has not been cut away, and of the head under which the original stone has been left standing), see the limestone falcon in the Louvre (TEL, *Encyclopédie photographique de l'art*, tome I, pl. 133; Boreux, *Guide-catalogue sommaire*, p. 332), the slate lion in Vienna (H. Demel, *Ägyptische Kunst*, Wien, 1947, pl. 38), the serpentine ichneumon in Vienna (*loc. cit.*, pl. 39), and on a larger scale the Hapy bull from the Serapeum in the Louvre (Boreux, *loc. cit.*, pp. 168-169, pl. XX).

² Cf. Elise J. Baumgartel, *The Cultures of Prehistoric Egypt* (London 1947), p. 30.

³ Petrie's *Sequence Dates* (hereafter abbreviated S.D.) as set forth in: Flinders Petrie, *Diospolis Parva* (London, 1901), pp. 4-12; and in: Flinders Petrie, *Prehistoric Egypt* (London, 1920), pp. 3-4. The Naqada I period covers S.D. 30-38.



Fig. 3. Hippopotamus, limestone

Avignon

Late Egyptian Period



Fig. 4. Hippopotamus, pottery

Saint-Germain-en-Laye

Early Predynastic

taken into account for comparison. All these statuettes, though not representing hippopotami but various types of ruminant animals, have bases like the Boston figurine and resemble it in size and type of modeling. Two animals, usually called cattle, on a base, from El Amrah and now in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford,¹ are dated to S.D. 33,² and the British Museum has in its collections a group of four figures of cattle on a stand which likewise was found at El Amrah and is dated to S.D. 32.³ Though both objects are made of unbaked clay, animal figures from an earlier tomb (S.D. 31) at El Amrah were found to be of pottery.⁴

As to hippopotamus statuettes, the Boston piece is the only one with its base preserved intact. Three more pottery hippopotami of equal or larger size are known of which the one from the collection of Jacques de Morgan, now in the Musée des Antiquités Nationales, Château de Saint-Germain-en-Laye, is the most impressive specimen (Fig. 4).⁵ It is said to come from the vicinity of Tukh (Nubt)⁶ which appears plausible as this place lies in the neighborhood of Naqada after which the predynastic cultures of Naqada I and II were named. I consider the de Morgan hippopotamus to be slightly earlier than the Boston statuette. The head is unnaturally elongated, the eyes are placed in the middle between nostrils and ears, and the body itself does not

show any of the roundness which is so characteristic of the animal and of which there is at least some indication in the Boston figure.

The second statuette is in the possession of the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, Toronto, Canada (Fig. 5).¹ The material is baked red clay which has been modeled in the same fashion as in our piece. The measurements differ from those of the Boston hippopotamus by not more than one centimeter; the right foreleg is attached to a piece of the original base with its curved front corner. The proportion of the distances between ears and eyes, and eyes and nostrils, appears to be the same as in our statuette, and as a final point of comparison may be added the distinctly concave outline of the belly which is not found on any other statuettes of these animals. Such similarity is possible only if the two pieces were made at the same time and in the same place, and I do not hesitate to state that both must have been made by the same man. The provenance of the Toronto hippopotamus is not known.

The last example of a pottery hippopotamus of predynastic times is the large statuette excavated by Petrie at Diospolis Parva and now in the Ashmolean Museum.² The tomb in which it was found is dated to S.D. 41 and thus falls into the beginning of the Naqada II period (Middle Predynastic). The style of this figure is considerably more advanced. The animal has a round bulky body, very short stubby legs, a wide-open mouth which causes the skin on the neck to fold in heavy rolls, and the tusks in the upper jaw are indicated: a vivid likeness of the beast, but very

¹ Sir E. Denison Ross, *The Art of Egypt Through the Ages* (New York & London, 1931), p. 6, pl. 83; Jean Capart, *Primitive Art in Egypt* (London, 1905), p. 188, fig. 148.

² D. Randall-MacIver and A. C. Mace, *El Amrah and Abydos* (London, 1902), pp. 16 and 60; cf. Flinders Petrie, *Prehistoric Egypt*, pl. LI.

³ Randall-MacIver, *loc. cit.*, pp. 16, 41, and 60, pl. IX, 1; cf. Petrie, *loc. cit.*, pl. LI. British Museum, *A Guide to the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Egyptian Rooms* (London, 1922), p. 245 (35,506).

⁴ Randall-MacIver, *loc. cit.*, p. 41 (Grave b 212); cf. Petrie, *loc. cit.*, pl. LI.

⁵ No. 77.718-f; see: J. de Morgan, *Recherches sur les origines de l'Égypte* (Paris, 1897), p. 128, fig. 413. Salomon Reinach, *Catalogue illustré du Musée des Antiquités Nationales*, tome II (Paris, 1921), pp. 103-104, fig. 50. Length 36 cm., height 11 cm., width 12 cm. Published here by kind permission of the curator, M. A. Varagnac.

⁶ Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, V, 117.

¹ Toronto B.1292. Published here by kind permission of the director, Mr. Gerard Brett.

² Length 27 cm., width 14.8 cm., height 15.5 cm. Petrie, *Diospolis Parva*, pl. VI (R.134), p. 35. The S.D. is given in Petrie, *Prehistoric Egypt*, pl. LII. A pottery hippopotamus in the Cairo Museum (*Journal* 26559), perhaps of the same date, is only inadequately published (*Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache* 36, 1898, pp. 124-125), length 16 cm., height 8.5 cm.; in style it resembles a small early dynastic faience hippopotamus in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (M.M.A. 44.4.11; from the J. P. Morgan coll.; length 11 cm.).

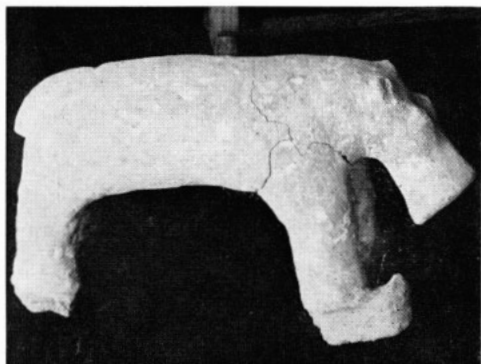


Fig. 5. Hippopotamus, pottery Early Predynastic
Toronto

unlike the earlier pieces which I have discussed before. This is the last piece of pottery sculpture (leaving aside the vases of fancy shape) done in predynastic times. From then on, as A. Scharff has pointed out,¹ sculpture in the round all but ceased to exist in Egypt until its revival just before Dynasty I.²

How close the connection is between hippopotamus statuettes and the white cross-lined pottery of S.D. 32-34 (first half of the early predynastic period) is shown by several vases which have small hippopotamus figures on the rim and the typical ornamentation of that style on the body of the vessel. A bowl found at El Mahasna and now in the Manchester Museum³ has two pairs of the animals walking on the edge in opposite directions, and the zig-zag design is carried over from the vessel onto their bodies. Apparently all four legs of each animal are modeled individually, while on a vase in the Cairo Museum⁴ two hippopotami in the round are represented hugging the rim and four of them are painted on the body of the vase.

This leads us to another group of white cross-lined pottery from the first half of the Naqada I period, without plastic decorations on the rim, in which the hippopotamus is drawn on the inside or outside of the vessel. Figure 6 shows three hippopotami in a circle on the interior of a deep bowl in the Museum of Fine Arts,⁵ and another vase, also from Dr. Reisner's excavations,⁶ (Fig. 7) has four hippopotami and five crocodiles along with water plants and fish on the outside. It is quite

remarkable in all these representations how the predynastic Egyptian craftsman was able to indicate the eyes and ears, the short tail, and the two pairs of stumpy little legs despite the schematic way in which he drew the animals. Of a later date are several vases in the shape of a hippopotamus;¹ these as well as theriomorphic stone and slate palettes, hippopotamus-shaped amulets, and tusk carvings are additional proof of the popularity this animal enjoyed in prehistoric Egypt.

The combination of hippopotami and crocodiles, so frequently encountered on the white cross-lined pottery of Naqada I, has its origin in the aquatic surroundings in which both animals dwell. But they are also brought into relation with the human inhabitants of the Nile valley: more than half of the pottery paintings of that period representing man show him as hunter of the hippopotamus, usually attacking it with a harpoon.² This one has to keep in mind when trying to explain the meaning and purpose of the Boston statuette. Primitive man worshipped that which inspired his fear, but since in this case he represented himself as the attacker the idea that the statuette was created in order to appease the dangerous beast is not valid. The figure was made for a burial and thus was meant to perpetuate some conception for the owner of the grave in his life after death. The animal is represented on a sledge-like base with curved front corners which is similar to one in the reliefs of King Pepy II on which a bound hippopotamus is dragged,³ and which reminds one of the bases supporting deities in animal form adorning ceremonial standards from the Old Kingdom to the Late Period.

At all times the hippopotamus was hunted in Egypt because it yielded meat and fat, hide, and especially tusks which were so useful to man. In historic times the hunt was considered a sport much practiced by the nobles, but defeating the hippopotamus had also some religious significance as early as Dynasty I when King Wedymu was represented wrestling with, and harpooning, hippopotami.⁴ It seems to me that the Boston statuette cannot be called anything but a hunting charm in view of the obscurity of primeval times. It may have had religious connotations, but our knowledge of the magical beliefs of that period is still vague and probably will never be very exact.

¹ In: *Handbuch der Archäologie*, vol. I (München, 1939), p. 446.

² A small pottery hippopotamus was found by Petrie at Abydos (*Abydos II*, pl. IX no. 188, p. 27), Dynasty I.

³ S.D. 34. E. R. Ayrton and W. L. S. Loat, *Pre-dynastic Cemetery at El Mahasna* (London, 1911), pp. 11, 26-27, pl. XI, 3; *Egypt Exploration Fund, Archaeological Report 1908-1909*, frontispiece; T. E. Peet, in: *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 2 (1915), p. 90, pl. XII fig. 2.

⁴ M. Quibell, *Archaic Objects* (Le Caire, 1904), p. 120 no. 11570, pl. 24; *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache* 61 (1926), pl. II fig. 1.

⁵ Acc. No. 11.312; height 6.8 cm., width 19.4 cm.; from Dr. Reisner's excavations at Mesaeed (Nag'el Mas'ad, on the east bank of the Nile, opposite Girga), tomb no. 26; W. S. Smith, *Ancient Egypt* (Boston, 1946), p. 15 fig. 1; cf. G. A. Reisner, *The Development of the Egyptian Tomb down to the Accession of Cheops* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), Appendix A.

⁶ At Naga-ed-Der, tomb no. 7129; now in the Cairo Museum. An almost identical vase with four hippopotami and six crocodiles is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (M.M.A. 12.182.14).

¹ British School of Archaeology in Egypt, *Studies*, vol. II (London, 1911), p. 42. G. Brunton and G. Caton-Thompson, *The Badarian Civilization* (London, 1928), p. 54; pls. XLVIII, 3 and LIV, 5. F. W. v. Bissing, *Tongefässe* (Vienne, 1913), pp. 37-38, pl. V (Cairo 2147). Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, no. B. 1293 (unpublished).

² See the references cited by Petrie, *Prehistoric Egypt*, p. 16 col. 2 ("Man"); also Ayrton-Loat, *loc. cit.* pl. XXVII; an unpublished vessel in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (M.M.A. 35.10) with crocodile, hippopotamus, and hunter.

³ G. Jéquier, *Le monument funéraire de Pepi II*, tome III (Le Caire, 1940), p. 21, pl. 32-34.

⁴ Cf. also the hippopotamus base with curved front end in a relief of Tuthmosis III at Karnak: *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* 42 (1943), pp. 272-273.

⁵ W. S. Smith, *A History of Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom* (Boston, 1946), p. 122, fig. 39.



Fig. 6. White Cross-lined Pottery Bowl
Boston Early Predynastic

One more unique feature of the pottery hippopotamus has to be mentioned here: the two rows of holes on the base on either side of the animal which were made when the clay was still wet (Fig. 8). They are without parallel,¹ and nothing more than a tentative explanation can be ventured. On an Egyptian relief, variously attributed to the Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, and New Kingdom, which was found some years ago built into the mediaeval walls of Cairo,² a hippopotamus is shown standing on a plain base marked with several vertical lines which in Egyptian relief usually indicate reed-matting. The faience figurines of the Middle Kingdom (Fig. 2) bear on their back paintings of the swamp flora,³ and the fragment of a faience vessel of the same period depicts the hippopotamus walking amidst the lush vegetation of its natural surroundings.⁴ Therefore, I think, reeds or some other aquatic plants were meant to be stuck into the holes in order to render the aspect of the hippopotamus statuette

¹ They have nothing to do with the holes on top of the hippopotamus tusk amulets (*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 13, 1927, pl. LV no. 3; W. S. Smith, *Ancient Egypt*, p. 17 fig. 4) which probably served for tying down a cover; see: Sir Robert Mond and Oliver H. Myers, *Cemeteries of Armant I*, pp. 38-39.

² *Antiquity, A Quarterly Review of Archaeology* 9 (1935), p. 350, pl. VIII. *Chronique d'Égypte* 11 (1936), pp. 468-469.

³ *Revue de l'Égypte ancienne* 2 (1929), pp. 210-253; 3 (1931), pp. 36-41.

⁴ M.F.A. 20.1266; G. A. Reisner, *Kerma I-III*, p. 392 no. 142; *Kerma IV-V*, p. 167 no. 142 and pl. 45 no. 9.

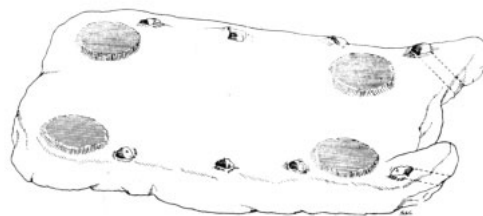


Fig. 8. Schematic Drawing of Base of Pottery Hippopotamus in Boston (legs removed)

more natural, but it must be stressed that no example of such a custom has ever been recorded from burials of predynastic Egypt and this interpretation cannot be anything but a theory for the time being.

Its unusual features and interesting subject render our pottery statuette most appealing, and in view of its great age the excellent preservation is even more amazing. Millennia have passed since this hippopotamus was created, its charm is still extant in a different world, no damage has harmed it, or in the words of Sir Thomas Browne: "Time which antiquates antiquities has yet spared this minor monument."

BERNARD V. BOTHMER.

A Drawing by Blake, Restored

AMONG the Blake watercolors from the Butts and Strange collections which the Museum acquired by gift in 1890 a drawing of *Abraham Preparing to Sacrifice Isaac* always seemed outwardly the least attractive. Small in size ($7\frac{5}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ in.), it was largely obscured by a heavy coating of varnish — no doubt applied by Blake himself¹ — and it was also laid down on both cardboard and paper. This varnished surface, now badly yellowed and scratched, concealed many details of foreground and background, much of the figure modelling, and all the original colors (Fig. 1). Rossetti, in his descriptive catalogue appended to Gilchrist's *Life*, noted after seeing the drawing that it was "very highly varnished all over into tone;" and even then so monochromatic

¹ "One extrinsic circumstance materially detracts from the appearance of this (*Jane Shore*) and other water-colour drawings from his hand of the period: viz, that as a substitute for glass, they were all eventually, in prosecution of a hobby of Blake's, varnished — of which process applied to a water-colour drawing, nothing can exceed the disenchanting, not to say destructive effect." Gilchrist, *Life of William Blake*, 1863, v. I., p. 31.



Fig. 7. Four Views of Vase from Naga-ed-Der

Cairo

Early Predynastic